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INTERIM REPORT on the Health and Sanitary
Circumstances of the Dawley Urban District
for the Year 1941

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

On the instructions of the Ministry of Health, the scope of the Annual Report has been restricted and again appears in an abridged form. In the directions issued for guidance in compilation it has been pointed out that comparisons are likely to be fallacious owing to the variety and magnitude of local population movement, and the uneven incidence of civilian deaths. This being so, it is not intended to submit figures which would, apparently, be the basis for accurate comparison with those of Peace Time. Nevertheless such figures as can be given and may be indicative to some extent of internal population changes, of improvements in service, and the presence of disease in the Area, will be found in the relevant sections of the Report.

The incidence of Infectious Disease in the District was again low. This maintained a standard which has prevailed over a number of years. The variety and frequency of these diseases are dealt with in the appropriate section. Attention may be drawn to the high frequency of Pneumonia: this occurring in the more aged, may in some measure be due to the exposed site of the Town - the severest months of the winter being associated with the highest numbers. The failure to reduce the numbers of pulmonary tuberculosis can reasonably be expected when, added to existing conditions, there is the additional stress and strain and irregularity of the times.

1941 saw the gradual adoption of the Emergency Measures put into force in 1940 to meet the changed conditions of administration. Orders concerning Water Supplies, the control of Housing, certain Infectious Diseases, and the Service of Meat to the Town, were the chief instances of these. For the current year the Ministry of Health found it necessary to guard against the possibility of spread of disease which could be associated with overcrowding and the movement of population. Orders giving guidance in the control and prevention, are concerned with Typhus and Scabies, and in connection with these, measures to be taken against lice.

During the course of the year the Ministry of Food, as an extension of their rationing scheme, granted invalids certain privileges and concessions to secure a more abundant supply: Milk and Eggs were mainly concerned.

Officers of Authorities were given the opportunity to become proficient in the methods of dealing with gas contaminated food-stuffs. The application of this instruction to his locality was the chief concern of the Sanitary Inspector.

The Principal Regional Medical Officer has, at times, directed attention to foods likely, through contamination, to carry disease.

The capacity and provision in the District to deal with the hospitalisation of expectant mothers was the subject of an investigation by the County Medical Officer. The attention of Medical Practitioners has been directed, as occasion arose, to matters of common interest: this with a view to securing the maximum co-operation in the Maintenance of efficiency in health practice.

The Medical Officer takes this opportunity of thanking your Sanitary Inspector for his help and co-operation during the Year.

POPULATION. No evacuees associated with any organised scheme remain in the Town, and such newcomers as have secured accommodation temporarily, have come voluntarily. The Ministry of Health decided that the Hostel, acquired for the use of child evacuees suffering from minor ailments, should be closed, and it is now no longer available. It has not been considered necessary to provide canteen accommodation for troops as the demand in the District is small.

CERTAIN FIGURES AND STATISTICS SUPPLIED BY THE MINISTRY.

	Males.	Females.
Live Births	80	66
Illegitimate	4	2
Still Births	4	2

Deaths under One Year of Age - 5

	Males.	Females.
Deaths	64	39

Some causes of Death:-

Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)	5
Influenza	3
Cancer	19
Cerebral Haemorrhage	16
Heart Disease	13
Road Accident	1

LABORATORY SERVICE. The pathological and bacteriological connection with the University of Birmingham has been severed with the opening of the Donaldson-Hudson Laboratory at Shrewsbury. This has been built as an annexe to the Royal Salop Infirmary. Another connection, with the Emergency Health Laboratory at Wellington, was broken, it was decided to move their Headquarters to Hereford.

AMBULANCE. This continues to give satisfaction and to meet the many calls made on its use. The arrangement for service is through local contract for maintenance and driving. The charge to users is low.

WATER SUPPLIES. The District continues to be served from the Wenlock Borough and no change has been made in the scheme or local Supply. At times it has been felt that the use of an auxiliary supply, an addition not sanctioned, would have relieved anxiety as to reserve particularly for use against fire. The Authority's pumping station at the end of the Year was working 17-18 hours per day and bringing some 5,000,000 gallons into the District in the Month.

Supplies are chlorinated at source and examinations made at regular intervals have confirmed the purity.

SCAVENGING. The Council have in use two motor lorries and one horse drawn vehicle for refuse collection, and in addition, a special tank cart for excretory material. The refuse carts are also used for the collection of salvage. A weekly collection is the aim, but labour difficulties have made maintenance uncertain. The privy user has, at times, had to make other provision for disposal, and this may have to be continued. This position, due to the Emergency Conditions, affects those in the more isolated parts.

SHELTERS. The original buildings have been retained and, in addition, the County Authority has provided two more in the Town. These Shelters are inspected and cleaned at regular intervals and are readily accessible to the people.

SEWERAGE. No changes have been made in the scheme. Repairs have been carried out where necessary and a strict control has been directed to the outfalls which require the closest supervision.

HOUSING. During the course of the Year no houses have been condemned Measures have been taken to guard against excessive overcrowding although this, to a certain degree, exists. Licences to permit the use of properties condemned but not demolished have been granted in

two instances: in association with the County Council, and the landlords. This grant may be expected to continue for the duration of the War.

While no new houses have been built, attention has been directed to the supervision and control of the existing Council property. Cases brought to notice of lack of care and want of cleanliness, have been investigated and the tenants have been warned against the continuance of these conditions.

MEAT AND FOODS. Meat continues to be delivered to the District from the Central Abattoir at Shrewsbury. It was found necessary to direct attention to the conditions of packing for transmission from there, and this has now been improved.

A close association is maintained between the Authority, and local shopkeepers, in the supervision of tinned and other foods. As occasion demanded, unsound articles have been confiscated.

To help the Country's food supply, local householders have been encouraged in the keeping of pigs, and with the same end in view, a collection has been made of all potato parings and waste food.

Plans are in preparation for the building of a central canteen to supply children in neighbouring schools with hot meals at mid-day. This building will be arranged so that, should it be found necessary its scope can be extended to feed persons who for other reasons, may be in need of this service.

MILK AND DAIRIES. These have been inspected and maintained as far as conditions permit.

The plan to secure a higher standard of purity in milk is expected to be put into operation early in the incoming Year. This will be in association with the Harper Adams Agricultural College

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. The number of cases notified was limited: in this respect similar to that recorded in recent years. Although limited in numbers, such diseases as came to notice, were in variety, but of such nature as to give rise to little or no concern.

Measles manifested itself chiefly in the second and third quarters, when there were 31 and 27 cases respectively. Whooping Cough gave rise to 6 cases in each Quarter, excepting the second, which was free.

Diphtheria was again practically absent from the District; one case occurred in the second quarter, and that was the total for the twelve months. A Return made at the end of the Year showed that 90% of school children and 50% of infants and pre-school children had taken advantage of the scheme for free protection from diphtheria. These figures represent returns above any others in the County, and it may again be emphasised that the stability of protection-extending now over the years from 1937 is reflected in the practical absence of this disease from the District during that period.

As in 1940 a considerable number of cases of Pneumonia - 23 in all were notified. The majority of these were reported in the first quarter, in keeping with the seasonal incidence of this ailment. The Area was comparatively free from Scarlet Fever, and such cases as arose were of a mild nature: 4 cases in all, and the second quarter was free.

One case of Paratyphoid Fever was reported in the Autumn; this in a young man. On investigation it was found that the patient was accustomed to move much outside the District, and it was considered that the infection had been contracted outside the Town.

Other diseases notified were 2 cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum and one of Erysipelas.

The numbers on the Tuberculosis at the end of the Year were as follows:-

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Pulmonary	Non-pulmonary	Pulmonary	Non-pulmonary
1940	32	34	30	31
1941	32	36	31	31

The above indicating a minimal rise on the preceding year, with a high ratio of pulmonary to non-pulmonary conditions in both sexes. Contagious infections, particularly scabies and impetigo gave rise to no difficulties during the Year, although there was increased evidence of the presence of the former in the last quarter. Much can be done by cleansing and a careful use of rationed soap will be necessary to ensure, through cleanliness of body and clothes, freedom from skin disease.

(signed) W.A.M.STEWART

Medical Officer of Health.

